

Cabinet

23 March 2021

(2.05 - 2.55 pm)

This meeting was held virtually and live streamed.

Approved Minutes

Present:

Chair: Mayor J Driscoll

Councillors G Bell, R Dodd, J McCarty, B Pickard and G Sanderson, Mayor N Redfearn and Ms L Winskell

Also: Mr R Fry (Observer)

141 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor N Forbes.

142 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

143 ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE MAYOR AND/OR THE HEAD OF PAID (IF ANY)

The Mayor opened the meeting and introductions were made.

References were made to the forthcoming local elections and the pre-election period.

Members and officers were congratulated for their work and achievements to date.

144 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 26 January 2021 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

145 **WORKING TOGETHER FOR YOU - NTCA ANNUAL REPORT**

Submitted: A report of the Director of Policy and Performance (previously circulated and copy attached to Official Minutes).

The Cabinet considered the North of Tyne Combined Authority's annual report which set out the Authority's achievements over the last year. The report demonstrated how the Authority was creating opportunities and driving innovation, including through working in partnership with public sector, private sector, education sector, voluntary sector and communities.

The Mayor introduced the report and welcomed the success of the North of Tyne Combined Authority. He highlighted key accomplishments, including the creation of jobs, management of the Adult Education Budget Devolution, progress regarding the Green Deal and low carbon economy, investment into digital assistance for the region and support for the local recovery post COVID-19. He also emphasised the Authority's ambition regarding zero carbon and zero poverty environment for the North of Tyne.

Members, officers and partners were thanked for their work, especially during the challenging times as a result of COVID-19.

Mayor N Redfearn spoke about the Combined Authority's successful work in partnership across different sectors. She commended the Authority for achieving goals and changing residents' lives, including supporting people into jobs, supporting young people, launching the Good Work Pledge, building new homes and planning for many more achievements to be delivered.

Councillor J McCarty introduced the Inclusive Economy Board annual update. She thanked Bishop Christine Hardman for her leadership. She also thanked all volunteers who had joined the Board for their continuous commitment. She explained that Digital Inclusion and Child Poverty would be the key focus points for the work of the Board going forward.

Members mentioned that more resource was needed to enable the Combined Authority to continue to make significant changes for the North of Tyne area.

In summarising the discussion of the annual report, the Mayor spoke about the Combined Authority's work in partnership, and how this way of working was key to being able to deliver good value for money. The work to date and the accomplishments had demonstrated what could be achieved if appropriate support and funding was secured from the government.

RESOLVED – That "Working Together For You", the North of Tyne Combined Authority's annual report, be endorsed.

146 **NORTHUMBERLAND LINE ECONOMIC GROWTH CORRIDOR**

Submitted: A report of the Director of Economic Growth (previously circulated and copy attached to Official Minutes).

The Cabinet considered the report which provided an update on the Northumberland-North Tyneside-Newcastle Line Economic Growth Corridor Strategy, sought associated approvals and proposed next steps for implementation.

The report was introduced by Councillor G Sanderson, who explained the role, ambition and importance of the project for the North of Tyne economy and invited the Combined Authority's support.

Members welcomed the project and the opportunities for the area.

RESOLVED – That:

- i. The report be noted;
- ii. The Northumberland Line Economic Corridor Strategy be endorsed;
- iii. An allocation of up to £500k from the North of Tyne Investment Fund to establish a Technical Capacity Fund and related capacity for project development, subject to the development of a business case be agreed; and
- iv. The Interim Head of Paid be authorised, in consultation with the Investment Panel, the Mayor and the Portfolio Holders, to consider and approve the business case and requested funding.

147 INVESTMENT FUND UPDATE AND FUNDING APPROVALS

Submitted: A report of the Director of Economic Growth (previously circulated and copy attached to Official Minutes).

The Cabinet considered the report which provided an update on the Combined Authority's Investment Fund programme and sought associated approvals.

The report was introduced by Councillor B Pickard, the Portfolio Holder, who highlighted the key points reflected in the document, including the scope of work to date, the environment within which the Combined Authority was operating and the significant progress achieved.

Councillor Pickard spoke about the role and importance of the North of Tyne Investment Fund in the context of a complex and difficult environment as a result of the coronavirus pandemic; and how the Combined Authority worked in partnership with local authorities across the North East to quickly utilise resources to support residents, businesses and jobs.

Councillor B Pickard thanked and congratulated the Cabinet Members for their work and leadership in delivering significant achievements through a variety of projects. Recognition was given to all Portfolios of the Combined Authority.

Councillor B Pickard also welcomed and endorsed the achievements that were highlighted in the annual report, as set out earlier on the agenda and discussed earlier at the meeting.

Members welcomed the report and the Combined Authority's achievements. Councillor B Pickard was thanked for his work.

Mr R Fry, the Mayoral Ambassador for the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector and the sector representative, welcomed the Poverty Truth Commission work of the Combined Authority and expressed the VCSE's desire to deepen its links with that workstream. The VCSE sector was also interested in the Combined Authority's work regarding young people, including tackling youth unemployment and supporting young people's mental health and resilience. Mr Fry was thanked for his role and his work.

The ensuing discussion included the following:

- The speed of progress of schemes;
- The process the schemes had to go through, including external adjudication and meeting The Green Book requirements;
- A suggestion that further work was required to identify how local businesses could be supported to understand the bidding process and The Green Book requirements and be able to draw up business plans accordingly;
- The importance of developing partnerships and working in partnership to support the effectiveness and success of the local decision-making process;
- The benefit of having a list of reserve projects;
- The importance of receiving support from the government for the North of Tyne area for the post-COVID-19 recovery, a proposal that had gone into the Comprehensive Spending Review last year.

RESOLVED – That:

- i. The progress to date on the Investment Fund, achievement of key milestones and ongoing development work, particularly in respect of defrayed expenditure and achievements in terms of tangible jobs for residents as a direct result of our investment, be noted.
- ii. The funding of £1,540,405 from the Investment Fund for the North Shields Fish Quay Protection Jetty Refurbishment project be approved.
- iii. The funding of £750,000 from the Investment Fund for the Cross Tyne North Shields Ferry Landing – Renewal and Relocation project, subject to the applicant securing necessary match funding, be approved.
- iv. The progress on NTCA's Brownfield Housing Fund, including in-principle approvals being given of £6.385 million for Smith's Dock, Tyne Brand and Unicorn House in North Shields, be noted.
- v. The £10m allocation for Recovery Innovation be confirmed. And the approach set out in Section 1.4 of the report be approved. Calls for projects would be structured on a "test-and-learn" basis, with an initial allocation of funding released as a first phase and future phases would be dependent on demand, speed of implementation and impact.
- vi. The progress in relation to the Digital Adoption North of Tyne Programme, including enhancement of the support available to small and medium

enterprises (SMEs) to further improve resilience in response to COVID-19 and inclusion of a dedicated offering for Voluntary and Community Sector organisations, be noted.

- vii. The Cabinet noted that the NTCA's Green New Deal Fund would be operational in the summer of 2021, where £9m of NTCA funding was expected to leverage private sector resources to deliver an £18m investment, enabling the North of Tyne to take a real lead in an area that would be fundamental to future growth, recovery, and the achievement of net zero.
- viii. The progress on the North of Tyne Offshore and Subsea Infrastructure Programme, including approval of £2.22m for Bates Clean Energy Terminal and £2m for Swans Energy Park, and agreement to open a further call to continue the development of the pipeline, be noted.
- ix. Section 1.8 of the report, in relation to the Healthy Ageing Economy sector narrative and investment priorities, be noted; and the specific priorities and recommendations itemised in Appendix A of the report be agreed.
- x. Authority be delegated to the Director of Economic Growth, in consultation with Investment Panel, the NTCA Constituent Authorities and the Mayor, for submission of a Community Renewal Fund bid to the Government and for the submission of a Levelling Up Fund bid into this or future rounds.
- xi. Future progress updates on the Poverty Truth Commission, whose business case for funding was now approved, be received.
- xii. The Interim Head of Paid Service be authorised to finalise the conditions to be attached to the above funding awards; and the Interim Monitoring Officer be authorised to complete the necessary documentation.

148 **ADULT EDUCATION BUDGET UPDATE AND STRATEGIC SKILLS PLAN**

Submitted: A report of the Head of Inclusive Growth (previously circulated and copy attached to Official Minutes).

The Cabinet considered the report which:

- provided an update on provision that had been delivered through the devolved Adult Education Budget (AEB) for the period from 1 August 2020 to 6 February 2021.
- set out the adult education opportunities that had been created for the North of Tyne Combined Authority (NTCA) residents during the first half of the current academic year and outlined next steps for managing the AEB delivery for the remainder of the academic year and into the next academic year.
- set out an updated Strategic Skills Plan for 2021-2023, which highlighted strengths, opportunities and challenges across the NTCA region and set out key priorities and a programme for skills development.

The report was introduced by Councillor J McCarty, the Portfolio Holder, who explained the work undertaken and highlighted key achievements.

Members welcomed the positive outcomes, which had been achieved despite the significant challenges due to the coronavirus pandemic, and emphasised the importance of local decision-making. Councillor J McCarty and the AEB team were thanked for their work.

RESOLVED – That:

- i. The progress which had been made in terms of AEB delivery for the first half of the academic year (1 August 2020 to 6 February 2021) be noted; and the approach to managing AEB delivery for the remainder of the current academic year and into the academic year 2021-2022 be endorsed.
- ii. The contents of the updated Strategic Skills Plan for 2021-2023 be noted; and the launch of the document from 1 April 2021 be endorsed.

149 **MAYORAL AMBASSADORS REVIEW**

Submitted: A joint report of the Monitoring Officer and the Director of Policy and Performance (previously circulated and copy attached to Official Minutes).

The Cabinet considered the report which presented a review of the first full year of the Mayoral Ambassador role for the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector and proposed an extension of the appointment.

The report also invited the Cabinet to consider and approve the proposals for an alternative way of working for the Business Ambassador role.

Mr Fry, the Mayoral Ambassador for the VCSE sector, was thanked for his work, especially his support in navigating engagement between the Combined Authority and the sector. The VCSE sector was recognised as an important delivery partner of the Combined Authority.

When addressing the Cabinet with a response, Mr Fry welcomed the developing momentum of the Voluntary Sector Stakeholder Group and thanked officers of the Combined Authority for supporting this work.

Regarding the proposals for the Business Ambassador role, Ms L Winskell, the North East Local Enterprise Partnership Member of the Combined Authority, expressed support for the proposals and offered her continuing involvement.

RESOLVED – That:

- i. Mr Robin Fry's term of office as the Mayoral Ambassador for the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector be extended for a further year until the NTCA Annual Meeting in June 2022; and
- ii. The proposed changes to the appointment of a Mayoral Ambassador for Business, as set out in part 1.3 of the report, be agreed.

150 **DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING**

Tuesday, 8 June 2021 at 2pm (Annual Meeting).

General comments were made, and best wishes offered, regarding the forthcoming local elections.

The Combined Authority's Members from Northumberland County Council thanked the Combined Authority for its work and expressed hope that the County Council would continue to play an active role within the Combined Authority.

151 **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

RESOLVED – That by virtue of paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, press and public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting for the duration of the consideration of agenda item 12 (Confidential Minutes of the Previous Meeting) because exempt information was likely to be disclosed and the public interest test against the disclosure was satisfied.

152 **CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The confidential minutes of the previous meeting held on 26 January 2021 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.